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**James A. Himes**  
**Congress of the United States**  
**4th District, Connecticut**

Governor M. Jodi Rell  
Executive Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
210 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

September 15, 2010

Dear Governor Rell:

As you know, FEMA has rejected the State of Connecticut's request for a federal disaster declaration following severe weather and a tornado on June 24, 2010. The tornado that touched down in Bridgeport was a localized incident, concentrated not only in a low income part of the county, but in a low income part of the city. On the heels of March storms in the same area that were declared a major disaster, recovery and rebuilding efforts have been made only that much more difficult. I urge you to appeal FEMA's decision.

I understand that there are guidelines for damage thresholds that must be met on both the county and state level to receive federal assistance. As made clear under 44 CFR 206.48, however, FEMA must also take into consideration damage from recent disasters within the "last twelve-month period" and localized impact, understanding that "at times there are extraordinary concentrations of damage that might warrant federal assistance even if the statewide per capita is not met." A localized weather system that devastates the homes and businesses of those who have the greatest need within our state cannot be disregarded simply because the damage inflicted does not meet a statewide threshold in the same way that a widespread natural disaster such as a hurricane or earthquake would.

I would be remiss if I did not remind you that over 20% of Bridgeport residents live below the national poverty level, compared to 12.9% of the nation. The income median for the City of Bridgeport is under half of the median income of the rest of the county and according to the Census Bureau, 42% of residents in the East Side of Bridgeport, the area the storm and tornado most severely impacted, have a median income below the national poverty level. Bridgeport has the highest unemployment rate in the county, 12.9% compared to 7.9% for Fairfield County.

Without this assistance, Bridgeport, a city already struggling, will have great difficulty recovering financially from this disaster. I strongly urge you to appeal FEMA's denial.

Regards,

Jim Himes